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A

LETTER,

TO THE

Right Hon. GEORGE GRENVILLE.

[Price one Shilling and Sixpence.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

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Right Hon. GEORGE GRENVILLE.

Quem maxumè odiſti, ei maxumè obſequeris: aliud ſtans, aliud ſedens, de rep. ſentis: his maledicis, illos odiſti, leviſſume transfuga: neque in hâc, neque in illâ parte fidem habes. SALLUST.

LONDON:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, next the Mitre Tavern, Fleet-Street.

M.DCC.LXIII.

A

LETTER

TO THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, next the Nine Tavern, Fleet-Street.

MDCCLXIII.

A

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

HAD you not been on two accounts remarkably conſpicuous already, you ſhould not have been made more ſo by this letter. The one is, when the ſtrength of the oppoſition, ſupported by the voice of the people, forced the earl of Bute to reſign, a declaration was made by authority to all the foreign miniſters, ſignifying, that his majeſty had been pleaſed to place his government in the hands of the Right Hon. George Grenville, and the earls of Egremont and Halifax; who, in all matters of importance, were not to act ſeparately, but in a conjunction of the three. The other is, the buſy part you are ſuppoſed to have acted in raiſing and fomenting a

cry againſt Mr. Wilkes. I will not abſolutely tax *you* with being the author of the many nonſenſical miniſterial ſquibs and letters in all the papers, of the many hand-bills diſperſed about the ſtreets, and of that laborious and contemptible miniſterial paper called the Plain Dealer, but I do really believe you know *who is*; and if he actually has the honour of receiving his inſtructions from the firſt lord of the treaſury, and his pay from Mr. chancellor of the exchequer, I much wonder that one ſo learned in the law, and conſequently ſkilled in our conſtitution, ſhould not have been able to defend the cauſe much better. But the attempt at doing what was intended to appear like ſomething, I preſume was to make amends for the deficiency, in not acting openly in conjunction with your coadjutors, the wiſe and diſpaſſionate earls of Halifax and Egremont, in the apprehenſion and commitment of Mr. Wilkes; which being a matter of importance, the aſſiſtance of the third perſon was abſolutely neceſſary towards fulfilling the declaration. Notwithſtanding this aid (which I do not doubt was to the beſt of your abilities, *if you really* had *any hand in it)* I have not as yet heard that Mr. Wilkes has brought any action againſt you, ſo that I cannot help lamenting thoſe labours are likely to eſcape without any reward.

However, it is not my intention to reproach; I leave that to thoſe whom you have both deſerted and deceived. But were I to give the public but a very ſhort ſketch of your conduct from the time of your being a ſolicitor at the Old Bailey, to your holding (I hope for yourſelf, not *another)* the high office of firſt lord of the Engliſh treaſury, I do not know whether your veracity,

city, ability, or integrity, would moſt be doubted. But this I will not do: ſome part of it may relate to private life, with which the public, ſir, have no concern; yet I mean it as a hint to the venal tools of your cauſe, who have daily in news-papers and pamphlets abuſed the private characters of ſeveral noblemen and gentlemen, which are not only as irreproachable as your own, but, perhaps, much leſs ſo than ſome of thoſe with whom you are in league. The libels, however, which the *hired* advocates of your cauſe (for I will do you the juſtice to believe you have none but what *are hired)* have publiſhed, are diſregarded by the public; and thoſe very noblemen and gentlemen, whom your ſcriblers have attempted to ſlander, look down with contempt on both the libels and the libellers; and conſider them, as every honeſt man does, the pitiful and wretched ſhifts to which the miniſtry are reduced, in order to acquire, what they never had, ſome little credit with the people. Nay, ſo odious and obnoxious is your cauſe to the honeſt and ſenſible part of the nation, that if a man in any public company, from the greateſt to the meaneſt, were but to attempt to ſpeak in defence of the miniſtry, he would be ſhun'd by every man preſent, and looked upon as one of your tools or emiſſaries, *ſent about to deceive.*

Since the North Briton was ſeized, for aſſerting the rights of every free-born Engliſhman, to canvas, and ſcrutinize with the utmoſt freedom, what is vulgarly called the king's ſpeech; and ſince the miniſtry have attempted, and are ſtill endeavouring to confound, the ſacred name of their ſovereign, with the acts performed in his kingly office by their advice, and for which they

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alone are reſponſible, as if any canvas of them were an inſult upon majeſty; the people have taken the alarm: becauſe ſuch a ſtep ſeems to lead to an invaſion of their liberties by an arbitrary extenſion of the *prerogative*. I am ſorry there ſhould be any occaſion for mentioning the word prerogative; my lord Bute's advocates * raiſed ſuch a cry about the prerogative, that many are inclined

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* It would be juſtice to his lordſhip to acquaint him, thro' your means, that he is continually expoſed to the moſt ſevere cenſures and ſuſpicions, by the ſtupid defences of a monthly underſtrapper to a Scottiſh printer and publiſher. The piece thus iſſued forth is called the Critical Review, the deſign of which now is, and of late has been, to indiſcriminately condemn all pieces which are wrote on the behalf of the Engliſh liberty, conſtitution or intereſt, and to applaud with rapture whatever has a tendency to the promotion and eſtabliſhment of arbitrary power and Scottiſh ariſtocracy, or defends lord Bute and abuſes the Engliſh nation. From hence it has been remarked by thoſe, who have had patience to read but a few pages, that lord Bute has certainly taken the writer (I mean the *doer)* into his pay; otherwiſe, ſay they, ſurely ſuch a barefaced and ſcandalous partiality would not be repeatedly manifeſted with reſpect to *every* book he pretends to criticiſe. Unluckily, by ſome means or other, a notion has got abroad, that the *doer* of the Critical Review is the ſame perſon who *did* the Briton, a miniſterial paper, which every week abuſed the people of England, becauſe they would not bend their necks to the yoke of a Scottiſh miniſter: the inference from which is, that lord B— took every little mean and vile method to impoſe himſelf upon the public, even to the *puffing* of the moſt wretched performances on the behalf of himſelf and his cauſe; but I will do his lordſhip the juſtice to *believe*, that in this particular he is entirely innocent of what has been, and ſtill is, ſuſpected of him; my reaſons for believing ſo are, viz. That the Review is printed by a Scot, is publiſhed by a Scot, and Dr. Smollett, who is a Scot, was lately impriſoned and fined for being the author of a libel in it. I therefore think, that as ſuch a Scottiſh clan belong to it, that alone is ſufficient to cauſe the partiality, which ſo forcibly ſtrikes every man who reads but a few lines in it. Although the natural propenſity in Scotſmen to the being partial is no new remark, yet they ſhould in juſtice, in gratitude to the people, who has prevented them from crawling in filth, famine, and miſery, at leaſt ſpare their groſs abuſe, and ſtop their licentious tongues. Although they are in their natures proud, tyrannical, overbearing and arrogant; yet it is now high

inclined to doubt, whether they did not contribute more effectually to his overthrow, than even the North Briton himſelf. But now that we have, in all *outward* appearance, an Engliſh miniſter, who has himſelf been the *retained council* againſt arbitrary proceedings of this kind, and who, if ever in his life time he was in earneſt, has offered, what was the greateſt ſacrifice to him, to plead *gratis* againſt them; who could have expected to ſee, during his adminiſtration, any thing that ſhould bear the leaſt reſemblance to a deſign for extending the prerogative? Yet what is it but an extenſion of the prerogative, no matter by what mode it is enforced (though particularly odious if by any of the foul dregs of the Star Chamber) that forbids the people of England to condemn, or even canvas, the tranſactions of the miniſtry, becauſe, as they have received the royal approbation, ſuch freedom is an inſult upon the king? Thus, by this parity of reaſoning, we are not to ſay the peace is bad; nor that the exciſe is an attack on our conſtitution; becauſe they have received the royal approbation, and therefore any blame of them would be an inſult upon majeſty: upon the ſame principle likewiſe, no act of parliament ought ever to be repealed. From an inſult it is to be conſtrued and termed *treaſon*; and then the ſecretary of ſtate, without any information upon oath againſt the offending perſon, may iſſue a warrant, without in-

high time they ſhould take ſhame to themſelves, and, if poſſible, live in peace and ſilence. The years 1715 and 1745, it is hoped, have convinced them, they cannot place an arbitrary Stuart on the Engliſh throne; and the year 1763 will be an everlaſting monument of their defeated attempt to domineer over us by another Stuart, in the character of a Scottiſh miniſter.

ſerting his name or deſcribing his perſon, and ſend the king's meſſengers to break open the man's houſe at midnight, ſeize his perſon and his papers, break his locks and plunder his houſe from top to bottom, and when he is carried away by force, and his friends are endeavouring to procure him that liberty which the laws of this country would give him, he is toſſed about, in a manner ſomething like ſmuggling, and at length thrown into a jail where nobody is admitted to ſee him, and he is conſequently deprived of the *benefit* of the laws of his country. The caſe here alluded to, you need not be informed, is that of *every* Engliſhman, in the perſon of Mr. Wilkes.

I would calmly and diſpaſſionately aſk you, ſir, whether you think the people of England will ſubmit to this ſort of treatment? and whether, if you remember any of your former pleadings on the behalf of Mr. Amhurſt, as author of the Craftſman, you do not think ſuch warrants, and ſuch outrages, abſolute and direct attacks on the freedom and conſtitution of this country?—It is true the Scots talk high in their vindication; they are warmly for an extenſion of the prerogative; for making the king ABSOLUTE if it was poſſible; therefore they are not to be minded. They are arbitary and overbearing in their very natures; their Lairds uſed to keep gaggs and racks in their houſes, to torture their vaſſals, when they wanted them to confeſs or impeach; they never were bleſſed with ſuch a thing as Magna Charta: they never had any idea of the mildneſs of the Engliſh government, which abhors the very thoughts of torture; the horrid practice of which, the laws of Scotland admit in its full extent. But we are now,

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thank heaven, no longer under Scottiſh government; we have at leaſt the *appearance* of an Engliſh one; and therefore expected to have ſeen the true ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution aſſerted and preſerved. Inſtead of that, there ſeems to be the ſtrongeſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that, under colour of an Engliſh adminiſtration, it was reſolved to attempt what was too odious, and too unpopular, to be hazarded while the Scot was *openly* in power: otherwiſe the North Briton might have been perſecuted long before No. 45 appeared. But this is a point too tender to be inſiſted upon. The natural pride of human nature is ſuch, that none of us chuſe it ſhould be *publickly* known, that we are *ſubordinates*; notwithſtanding it may have been *privately* ſettled among friends: therefore I will take my leave of this point, with only ſuppoſing, you are perfectly acquainted with both the truth and force of it. Yet I much queſtion, if the North Briton had been perſecuted while the Scot *was openly* in power, the people would have been more alarmed by an attack on their liberties, than they no*w* are; nay, I do believe, that weak and incapable as his enemies have pronounced him to be, he would have managed the affair much better.

Can any thing be more odious to Engliſhmen, than an attempt to *exclude* them from giving any opinion or judgment on miniſterial tranſactions? or more alarming to a man, who is acquainted with our conſtitution, than a deſign to ſet the king in ſo high and awful a light, that whatever he does, or ſays, even in his REGAL capacity, though by and with the conſent of his council, for which his adviſers are reſponſible, is nevertheleſs *not to be queſtioned*, by any perſon, either as to the truth or wiſdom of

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it? Was it ever underſtood, or ſuppoſed, that a king of England could give his ſanction in ſuch a manner to any thing, ſo as to put it *above* the judgment of his ſubjects; who are thereby to be *excluded* from, or *abridged* of, their ancient, and, till hitherto, undiſputed right, of giving their opinion, whether they think it good or bad? Or, was it ever underſtood by the people or parliament, that any miniſter, or ſet of miniſters, could take refuge behind the royal perſon, from the blame of any tranſactions executed in the royal functions? Or was it ever underſtood by any Engliſhman, that the miniſters were not reſponſible for every thing tranſacted in the royal functions; becauſe ſuch tranſactions, of whatſoever nature they are, are not valid, unleſs with the advice and conſent of ſome of them? If, therefore, any of thoſe tranſactions are found, upon examination, to be *falſe*, weak or prejudicial; ought not every Engliſhman, by the right which he has of ſpeaking his ſentiments, to lay the blame of them upon him who adviſed them?

Upon the ſame reaſoning; if a *falſehood* is *ſurpriſed* upon his majeſty, and he gives it, as he received it, to his parliament; and it is afterwards diſcovered to be an impoſition, who is to bear the blame, the impoſer, or the impoſed? or muſt no man open his lips upon the occaſion? By the ſpirit of our conſtitution a king of England can do no wrong; therefore the blame muſt neceſſarily fall upon the impoſer: and he who detects the impoſition, will in that inſtance have done a piece of real good ſervice to his country: the miniſtry, as may be expected, will abhor him; will take every method, however low, pitiful and baſe, to calumniate, and, if poſſible,

poſſible, depreciate him in the eyes of the people; but every honeſt man will deſpiſe them; becauſe, if they are capable of impoſing a falſehood on their ſovereign, they are unfit for his ſervice, and their words on no other occaſion are proper to be taken.

I ſpeak in this manner, becauſe the partizans of the preſent miniſtry, have repeatedly attempted to impoſe on the public, through the channel of the papers, that number 45, the laſt number of the *real* North Briton which has been *publiſhed*, is a libel upon the king's ſpeech, by telling the ſovereign he had told a falſehood. I have carefully read that famous paper, and I own I can no where perceive, any thing like a libel upon the king's ſpeech, or that the lie is given to the ſovereign. There are indeed the words INFAMOUS FALLACY; which are ſuppoſed to be thoſe which have given moſt offence. But a fallacy, ſir, is not a falſehood; there is a material difference. The cry, which the fooliſh abettors of your cauſe have raiſed on this occaſion, has been owing to their not underſtanding Engliſh. A fallacy is compoſed of a number of words only *tending* to deceive. Penſioner Johnſon explains the word, " logical artifice; deceitful argument;" and quotes the great Sidney as authority. Whereas a falſehood may be *one* word, and direct in its implication. Penſioner Johnſon explains *falſehood* thus, " want of truth; want of veracity; a lie; a falſe aſſertion." But the moſt extraordinary thing yet, is, if that paſſage in the ſpeech from the throne, to which the North Briton applied the words *infamous fallacy*, be true, why is it omitted, together with theſe two offenſive words, in the information againſt the North Briton? are the

miniſtry afraid to let the veracity be diſputed in an open court, where the truth muſt be ſifted out? or do they find they cannot ſupport it? —Whether they will not preſume, for the ſake of their own credit, to attack the veracity of the North Briton, cannot yet be determined. But I think it pretty clearly follows by the omiſſion of thoſe remarkable words, *infamous fallacy*, which are ſuppoſed have been principally offenſive, together with the other parts of the paper which ſeem to a common eye moſt acrimonious, that they intend not to try him for giving the lie to his ſovereign, as their tools have falſely aſſerted he did, but for aſſerting the conſtitutional rights of the people, and their claim to a full examination and detection of all impoſitions from miniſters. This queſtion will therefore naturally follow, Why was the cry raiſed of the North Briton having given the lie to majeſty, if it is either not intended or cannot be proved?

As ſome of the tools of your cauſe, may, amongſt their uſual nonſenſe thruſt into the news papers, term this a ſort of prejudging an affair, which is yet depending in a court of law; I beg leave to obviate whatever may appear like a charge of that kind, by aſſerting my equal right, to the giving my opinion and facts, relative to this matter, with any of thoſe who have been either hired or inſtructed, on the behalf of the miniſtry, to miſlead and deceive the public. Have they not chriſtened the North Briton number 45 a libel? Is it yet proved ſo; or has any jury given their verdict that it is ſo? Have they not chriſtened Mr. Wilkes the author; and has it ever been proved that he is? or have

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even the ſecretaries of ſtate, either, or both of them, any information upon oath, that he is? Have not your advocates, before any kind of proof is made, by every artful, and I will venture to ſay wicked means, endeavoured to biaſs, and ſet the public againſt Mr. Wilkes? Is this fair, in a country, where, by the laws, every man is ſuppoſed to be innocent till convicted? Have they not prejudged him? condemned him? and have not the Scots hanged him? — My arguments and my reaſonings are fair: they inſult no man, in either his private or public character. I do not ſcrutinize, and reaſon upon what *is done*; I only mention what *is omitted.*

The ſpeech which his majeſty pronounces to his parliament, is never in the debates of either houſe called his majeſty's, but the miniſter's, and is accordingly treated with the greateſt freedom. I could bring many inſtances, but I hope the following will be ſufficient: On the 17th of January, 1734, when the ſpeech from the throne was debated in the houſe of commons, Mr. William Shippen ſaid " it has always been taken for granted, that the " ſpeeches from the throne are the compoſitions of miniſters of " ſtate; and upon that ſuppoſition we have always thought our- " ſelves at liberty to examine every propoſition contained in them. " Even without doors people are generally pretty free in their re- " marks upon them; and I believe no gentleman that hears me, is " ignorant of the reception the ſpeech from the throne, at the " cloſe of the laſt ſeſſion of parliament, met with from the nation " in general."

To

To the authority of Mr. Shippen I will add the example of that truely able and impartial hiſtorian, Dr. Smollett; which to be ſure muſt have great weight, becauſe he has in the latter part of his hiſtory (as he calls it) bedaubed my lord Bute with ſuch groſs and fulſome adulation as would turn the ſtomach of an Engliſhman; and then the Critical Review has in the ſame groſs and fulſome manner *puffed* the hiſtory. In the year 1727, after giving a very partial ſummary of the ſpeeches which his late majeſty made to his firſt parliament, Dr. Smollett adds this *remark of his own*: "Thoſe "ſpeeches, penned by the miniſter, were compoſed with a view "to ſoothe the minds of the people into an immediate concurrence "with the meaſures of the government; *but without* ANY IN-"TENTION *of performing thoſe promiſes* of œconomy, reformation, "and national advantage." Thus, if we are to believe Dr. Smollett, his majeſty knowingly and purpoſely told a falſehood to his parliament, with a deſign to deceive them. Yet, though this was publiſhed during the life time of his late majeſty, neither the writer nor publiſher were taken up by a ſecretary of ſtate's warrant. And now I make no doubt but Dr. Smollett, who took this freedom with his late majeſty, is, like the reſt of the Scots, againſt any ſuch freedoms being taken with his preſent majeſty's ſpeech. I too am againſt *ſuch* freedoms as to ſay, or inſinuate, that his majeſty *knowingly* and *purpoſely* told a falſhood to his parliament, with an intent to deceive them: but I will never alter my opinion, that his majeſty, as well as many other good kings, may have been *ſurpriſed* into a falſhood. In ſuch a caſe, the blame of ſuch ſurprize will naturally, and conſtitutionally, fall upon the miniſters.

miniſters. This is the caſe of a ſovereign of Great Britain with reſpect to his ſpeech to his parliament. That ſpeech is *previouſly* compoſed by the miniſters, and is read to a ſelect number of the members, who are ſummoned to the Cockpit to hear it. To prove this fact, I deſire leave to ſtate one remarkable inſtance. Circular letters, dated from the Treaſury, of which lord Bute was at that time the head, were ſent as uſual to moſt of the members of the houſe of commons, deſiring their attendance at the Cockpit on the evening before the meeting of laſt ſeſſion of parliament. Mr. Fox took the chair, and produced to the company a paper, which he only called *a ſpeech*, and which he ſaid he would, as uſual, read to that aſſembly. He afterwards produced an addreſs, which he likewiſe read, (*not biſhop Fleetwood's* PREFACE) and then ſaid, lord Carysfort and lord Charles Spencer had been ſo kind to undertake to move and ſecond that addreſs. The ſame ceremony is obſerved with reſpect to the upper houſe of parliament: every lord has a ſummons, deſiring his attendance to hear the ſpeech, which is read by ſome diſtinguiſhed peer, who is ſuppoſed to conduct the buſineſs of the houſe of lords. The *ſpeech* read that evening by lord Bute's *doer*, Mr. Fox, was verbatim the king's ſpeech at the opening of the laſt ſeſſion of parliament; and the *addreſs* was verbatim the addreſs which was preſented by the houſe of commons to his majeſty, in return for *that* ſpeech from the throne.

Give me leave, ſir, to remark, that it is underſtood, that whoever at the Cockpit reads the ſpeech, is ſuppoſed to take upon him the buſineſs of the houſe of commons: it is therefore

no injuſtice to Mr. Fox, to call him lord Bute's *doer*. I think I ſhould further mention, that the table at the Cockpit is always covered with paper, pens, and ink, for the uſe of the members *to make remarks*.

I think this clearly and ſufficiently proves, that the ſpeech is the miniſter's ONLY, not the king's; and therefore it can be NO INSULT upon majeſty to make any remarks or obſervations upon it. If it were ever underſtood that any ſuch remarks could be conſtrued an inſult upon majeſty, would not the uſe of pen, ink, and paper, be forbid at the cockpit? The practice of ſummoning the members to the cockpit by a miniſterial writ, and haranguing them there before his majeſty opens the ſeſſion with a ſpeech from the throne, is but of modern date, and may be juſtly ranked amongſt thoſe improvements which have been lately made on our conſtitution; and as it may be unknown to a great part of the public, I will give a ſhort hiſtory of it from a very excellent pamphlet, publiſhed in the year 1734, entitled, *An humble Addreſs to the Commons of Great Britain*. "I don't know "exactly how long this cuſtom may have prevailed, nor is it of "much importance to the public; but I may venture to affirm, "that it hath been carried farther, within a very few years, than "it ever was before; having not only been punctually obſerved "at the beginning of every ſeſſion, but even proſtituted to the "ſervice of *particular jobs*. There is ſomething very ridiculous "in theſe *miniſterial conventions*. The firſt aſſembly is commonly "held at the *miniſter*'s own houſe, three or four days before the "meeting of *parliament*, and conſiſts only of a *few truſty creatures*, who

" who are called together in order to peruſe the *king's ſpeech*, and " conſider of proper perſons to move for and ſecond the *addreſs*. " *Theſe gentlemen*, who are generally propoſed by the *miniſter* " himſelf, after a ſelf-denying ſpeech, modeſtly declining ſo " great an honour, and deſiring it may be put into abler hands, " are at laſt overcome and prevailed upon to undertake it. At the " ſame time, theſe *choice friends* are let into the ſtate of affairs, " as far as is neceſſary, and inſtructed what to ſay, in caſe of a " debate upon ſeveral particular points. The *addreſs* likewiſe is " drawn up and ſettled, long before they met, as well as the " *ſpeech*; for it is the practice of *miniſters* not only to put what- " ever they think fit into their maſter's mouth, (which is com- " monly a panegyric on themſelves, or a juſtification of their " meaſures) but likewiſe to do the ſame kind office for the " *parliament*, and make them echo back the ſubſtance of it by " way of *addreſs*. When theſe points are ſettled in the *miniſterial* " *cabinet*, for ſo I may call it, a general aſſembly of all the *well-* " *affected* is ſummoned to meet, a day or two afterwards, at the " *cockpit*; where the ſame farce is acted over again, in a more " circumſtantial and ſolemn manner. The *miniſter* produces a " copy of the *ſpeech*; which being read and received with great " applauſe, it is reſolved, *nemine contradicente*, to promote a loyal " and dutiful addreſs to his majeſty upon it, not only to return " him thanks for ſo *gracious a ſpeech*, but to applaud the *wiſdom* " *of all his meaſures*. In this manner deviating from the antient " practice of parliament, which conſiſted only in returning his " majeſty thanks for the ſpeech, in general. Though it may be

" underſtood

" underſtood at home to be only a compliment of courſe, it cer-
" tainly carries a different aſpect abroad, and looks as if the par-
" liament had in a lump approved of all the meaſures of the ad-
" miniſtration. Then the perſons, agreed upon before to move
" and ſecond *this Addreſs*, are propoſed by *another* § *worthy gentle-*
" *man*, who is likewiſe let into the ſecret, and unanimouſly ap-
" proved. Here again they modeſtly decline it, as if there had
" been no *previous meeting*, and again with great importunity are
" prevailed upon to accept it.—What makes this ſcene ſtill
" more diverting is, that when the *commons* return to their *own*
" *houſe* from the *houſe of lords*, after his majeſty hath made his
" ſpeech, the ſpeaker tells them in a formal manner, *that he hath,*
" *with great difficulty, obtain'd a copy of it* †; when above half
" the members, perhaps, had ſeen, or heard it read, a day or
" two before."

What ſcenes are theſe about *ſettling* the ſpeech! which being known to every one preſent, for ALL circumſtances prove it, to be the miniſter's, and not the king's, is canvaſſed in every one of theſe aſſemblies with the greateſt freedom. In parliament it is underſtood and treated in the ſame manner. Is it therefore a libel to write one inch out of thoſe doors what could have been none within? or is it intended that the people ſhall know nothing but juſt what the miniſtry pleaſes? Yet if I were to aſk what crime the North Briton had committed, the trumpeters of the virtue and goodneſs of your cauſe

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§ The noble author is here miſtaken; it is always the *ſame perſon.*

† The noble author is here again miſtaken; for Mr. Speaker always ſays, " he had, to prevent miſtakes, obtained a copy."

would

would tell me, he had libelled the king's ſpeech. I am ſorry for the general good of my fellow ſubjects, whoſe intereſt and welfare the miniſtry ought to conſult and to promote, that ſo little underſtanding appears among their advocates, and even in what ſhould ſometimes ſeem to come immediately from themſelves, that they cannot perceive it muſt be an affront upon the underſtanding of almoſt every man to tell him, that it is an inſult offered to his majeſty, to make any remarks upon, or refutations of the ſpeech from the throne; when it is univerſally known, and believed, that the ſpeech ſo made is *not* his *majeſty's*, but his *miniſter's*; and that the adviſers and makers of it are *wholly* reſponſible for whatever it contains.

I am ſorry too, that, in a diſpute which is properly and only between the miniſtry and the people, his majeſty's name ſhould be introduced and made ſo free with, as it every day is upon this affair, by thoſe who by this means think they defend the miniſtry, and who doubtleſs intend, in violation of the conſtitution, to make out the pretended crime an inſult upon the king, not an attack on the miniſter's meaſures. Some candid men have thought, that this unnatural freedom, taken with the king's name, is *departing* from the principles of toryiſm, which have ever been ſtrenuouſly ſupporting an exalted and extravagant idea of the high and awful ſupremacy of the royal perſon; and therefore the miniſtry and their defenders are in this particular contradicting themſelves. It does indeed at firſt ſight ſeem like a contradiction of principles; but if we give ourſelves time to reflect on what will inevitably be the conſequences of the eſtabliſhment of an opinion and precedent, that any reaſoning, facts, or arguments, tending to

ſhew the weakneſs, fallacy, or injury of miniſterial meaſures and conduct, which the king has been adviſed to approve, is a groſs and puniſhable inſult upon the ſovereign; it will not appear ſo much like a *contradiction* of tory principles, as a moſt alarming *improvement* upon them.

Let us figure to ourſelves a tory ſitting in a private corner behind the curtain, ſurrounded by a number of his creatures plotting the utter deſtruction of our liberties, in order to introduce arbitary power. Building his whole ſyſtem on this fundamental principle, " allow but the reaſonings and arguments on the ſpeech " from the throne to be conſtrued an inſult upon the king," and upon that precedent will be eſtabliſhed the doctrine, That every future attack on the *meaſures* of the *miniſtry*, which have received the royal approbation, is ALSO an inſult upon the king. Thus allowing this one point, every other will readily be taken, till the people of England are become as abſolute ſlaves, as the people of France.--In a little time we are not to ſay the peace is bad, becauſe it has been ratified by the king, and would therefore be an inſult upon him. And with reſpect to every other miniſterial meaſure the caſe is to be the ſame. I do not know by what appellation you, or the hired ſlaves of your cauſe, will chuſe to diſtinguiſh this, but I will not heſitate to call it an arbitrary extention of the prerogative; a moſt alarming invaſion of the conſtitutional liberties of the people.

The liberty of the preſs conſequently receives its wound at the ſame time, and that no doubt is the great end intended to be accompliſhed; for it is not ſo much the debarring us of the natural

uſe

uſe of our tongue, that can tend to the ſecurity of a temporary and tottering adminiſtration, as the effectually putting an entire ſtop to the communication of our ſentiments in print; which, in caſes of danger, has ever had the good effect of alarming the people in general, with a ſenſe and knowledge of that danger, and thereby they have been enabled to put themſelves on their defence, and make head againſt ſuch attacks: but ſhould this liberty be deſtroyed, there will inſtantly be an end of every other; for this is the great bulwark which ſupports all the reſt. It is too viſible to be conceal'd, and it is too true to be denied, that there has lately been ſeveral attempts to accompliſh t. They have hitherto failed. But as this is a point which weak and wicked miniſters have inceſſantly laboured at, the people muſt continue to be watchful over it, leſt a time ſhould come when a miniſtry, afraid of their own conduct, or any part of it, being argued or reaſon'd upon before the public, ſhall have made ſuch large ſtrides towards deſpotic power, as to ſteal this ineſtimable jewel out of the hands of the people. No honeſt miniſter will ever ſhew a deſire of wounding this great and only barrier of the liberties of this free country. We have only to fear ſuch attacks from miniſters who are afraid their actions ſhould ſee the light, and who will therefore be eternally promoting, publickly or privately, perſecutions againſt authors, printers, and publiſhers, in order to put a ſtop to this liberty and eſtabliſh the office of a licenſer, where every thing is to be inſpected before it is printed. The yoke of ſlavery would then be moſt effectually put round the necks of the people; for there is no doubt but every thing Scottiſh, and in behalf of the miniſtry, would be inſtantly licenſed, while every thing otherwiſe

wiſe would doubtleſs be refuſed. We have lately had an inſtance of ſomething ſimilar. A tragedy called Elvira, written by a Scot, and intended to compliment lord Bute, was licenſed and performed at Drury-lane. Another tragedy, called Electra, written above twenty years ago, but unluckily by an Engliſhman, was refuſed a licenſe: now what could there be in a play, written above twenty years ago, which can be affirmed, with not a ſingle ſentiment ſince altered, that could with any propriety be deemed applicable to the preſent times, was aſtoniſhing to every one, who had either read the play or ſeen it rehearſed; yet it ſhould ſeem that ſome heads were ſo ſore as to take caps which no body ever intended for them, and therefore the licenſe was not granted. If ever this ſhould be the caſe with reſpect to the liberty of the preſs, might not fifty different arbitrary and grievous modes of EXCISE be paſſed into law, and ninety-nine parts of the kingdom ignorant of the invaſion of both their liberties and properties? — Every one has obſerved, how often the miniſterial champions have endeavoured to diffuſe the terror of the laws amongſt the honeſt and ſenſible part of the people, who will preſume to judge for themſelves, and conſequently diſſent from their falſe reaſonings and infamous fallacies. If it could be ſuppoſed that theſe writers give us the language and ſentiments of their maſters, it will follow, that the deſign of attacking our liberties is not far diſtant; for they have repeatedly talked of fines, pillories, and goals, and other tyrannic proceedings, ſuch as were practiſed by the ever odious and unconſtitutional ſtar-chamber; and, when they have found themſelves over matched in point of abilities, they have gone

gone ſo far as even to threaten ſuch of their antagoniſts with theſe kinds of puniſhment, hoping thereby to ſilence them. But this ſort of language has had no other effect than convincing us of their own arbitrary principles and ſecret inclinations. They have likewiſe had recourſe to ſcurility and abuſe, and have made uſe of every low and groſs epithet that could be dictated by malice and diſappointment, to inſult and revile the whole body of the people of England, and particularly the common-council of the city of London; who refuſed to proſtitute the honour of the metropolis with any ſervile and fulſome adulation to an adminiſtration which every good Engliſhman cannot reflect on without horror. The employers and the employed in this work are doubtleſs totally ignorant of the temper and genius of Engliſhmen, otherwiſe they would not take a method which borders ſo much on tyranny to ſerve an unpopular cauſe. Engliſhmen will not ſilently and patiently ſuffer a yoke to be put round their necks; they value themſelves on being free, and the right of communicating their opinions. Their high ſenſe of this liberty they will never ſuffer to be infringed; and that adminiſtration which attemps it muſt hazard its now ſafety. The people are, and they will conſider themſelves as the *proper* judges of all miniſterial conduct. Government and power came from them; and they therefore will enjoy the right of freely giving their opinion relative to all acts of that government and that power. That nonſenſe of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance, which, though not in *term*, has in *reality* been lately revived, could ſerve no other purpoſe than to create an alarm; for when once the right of the people to judge and to ſpeak be-

gins to be diſputed, they conſider it inſtantly as an attack on their liberties. Miniſterial advocates may be reſolved, without any regard to truth or the conſtitution, to delude the people into a different perſuaſion; but they will in the end find their miſtake: for the more the people are abuſed, or treated with inſignificancy in the manner they lately have been, or their liberties are invaded, the more they will be exaſperated. It therefore is not ſafe to puſh a point ſo apparently oppoſite to their inclinations.

The wretched advocates of the miniſtry have, in order to deceive the people into a notion that the ſpeech from the throne is in reality the king's, compared it to a man's will, which, ſay they, is certainly the will of the ſigner, not of him who drew it up. True, it is the will of the ſigner; and what makes it ſo is, *he dictates it*. But from only the ſingle fact already ſtated, relative to the buſineſs of the cockpit, it is clearly demonſtrated, that this is far from being the caſe with reſpect to the ſpeech from the throne: nay, it is quite the reverſe; for that ſpeech is compoſed by the miniſtry themſelves, and his majeſty perhaps does not even ſo much as know of it till it is read to him. I would therefore aſk you, ſir, whether this argument, fairly ſtated, turns out for or againſt your cauſe? and whether this one inſtance alone, though ſome hundreds could be brought, does not plainly evince the deſign of the miniſtry to make the regal character ſubſervient to their ſecurity?—If they were not aſhamed of their conduct, or afraid of the juſt judgment that muſt and will be put upon it, would they thus endeavour to ſcreen themſelves under

the

the protection of the ſacred name of their ſovereign?—I could puſh this nice point much further, but I chuſe to forbear, becauſe I hope you already feel the force of it. Yet I cannot help again expreſſing my extreme concern at ſeeing, in the productions of all thoſe who defend the miniſterial cauſe, the royal name ſo frequently introduced, ſo wantonly made cheap and common; nay, ſometimes hung out as if intended by way of terrorem to the people. I am ſo ſenſibly ſtruck, and I believe ſo is every man that has not lent himſelf in one ſhape or other to the ſupport of the miniſtry, with this ſort of ſubterfuge, that I ſuſpect whether they are capable of adminiſtering conſtitutional advice to the crown.—This whole affair ſavours ſo much of a deſign to abridge the people of their right to judge of public meaſures and miniſters, that it has all the appearance of a moſt alarming ſtep towards the eſtabliſhment of arbitrary power; I therefore cannot help concluding it with the words of one of the miniſterial advocates, "*It is wiſdom to foreſee ſuch danger*; "*it is courage to meet it in its approach*; *it is our duty to die or* "*to repel it.*"

The violation of the privileges of parliament is *another* ſubject. I dare ſay you think yourſelf happy in not being openly concerned in it; and I, as your friend, cannot help congratulating you on this lucky eſcape: indeed it was fortunate beyond example. But whilſt I am thus congratulating you, I forget that you are a coadjutor; which is a fact I would by no means ſuffer to ſlip my memory, becauſe of the reſpect to which it entitles you. I would not likewiſe be underſtood to be ſo cruel and hard-

hearted,

hearted, as not to feel for the misfortunes of others. I can tremble for the two ſecretaries of ſtate when the parliament meets, if contrary to the expectations of every rational creature they ſhould be ſecretaries till then, as much as any of my countrymen would rejoice in ſeeing them ſent to the Tower. I can feel for you, ſir, if you ſhould face the houſe of commons, both as firſt lord of the treaſury and chancellor of the exchequer—and ſhould moreover take upon you to *do* the buſineſs of that houſe. The exciſe act you cannot but be convinced *muſt* be repealed; and *where can you lay another tax?* I repeat it emphatically, *Tell me where can you lay another tax?* The people are utterly averſe to any *extenſion* or *enlargement* of the exciſe laws; and, I will venture to prophecy, will be utterly averſe to any new burdens impoſed by a miniſtry that has hitherto, in every ſtep they have undertaken, appeared both odious and contemptible: odious, becauſe they ſeem to be, in principle, enemies to the freedom and conſtitution of this country; contemptible, becauſe in every ſtep which they have taken, there has appeared the moſt evident want of ability. Does therefore any independent perſon, who is not ſeeking to ſell himſelf for ſome pecuniary conſideration, put any confidence in them?

To this embarraſſment *without* doors, I will add another which may poſſibly happen *within*. I am credibly informed, that notwithſtanding all the boaſts of *œconomy*, which every placeman and penſioner have echoed to the miniſterial ſhrine of Bute, the civil liſt is *conſiderably above* FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS *in arrear*; and that there was an intention, even laſt winter, of

applying

applying to the houſe of commons for four hundred thouſand pounds to diſcharge the then arrears of it: but Mr. Fox had more wiſdom than to appear in it; and this I take to be one of the moſt undoubted proofs of his being a man of *ſtrict* virtue, as well as good ſenſe; notwithſtanding he may have been overreached in ſome things, and have conſented, merely for the ſake of furthering his majeſty's buſineſs, to *do* ſome *little* matters which were beneath his character. How this large debt came to be accumulated I leave the public to judge. I can only take upon me to ſay, that when Mr. Pitt was driven from the ſtate *the civil liſt ſtood clear of all incumbrances.* Every one was paid up to his laſt quarter; agreeable to that wiſe and regular plan of quarterly payments, which Mr. Pelham eſtabliſhed a little before his death. Why the intended application was not made, every man will readily conceive who conſiders the late extraordinary methods of creating influence and extending power, as well as the neceſſity there was of procuring a ready ſupport on certain occaſions, and how dangerouſly all theſe might have been expoſed by a keen and penetrating oppoſition, which ſeemed determined at all events to diſpute, inch by inch, every ſacrifice of the intereſts, and every encroachment on the liberties, of the people: therefore for *prudential reaſons*, I ſuppoſe, the deſign was dropt. Such a key to the tranſactions of the winter as this muſt unavoidably have been, being for the preſent withheld from the public, we are left to form ſuch conjectures as may either ſuit our fancies, fears, or ſuſpicions. I will, for my own part, amuſe myſelf with the words of that famous member of

the houſe of commons, Mr. Shippen, upon a former motion to diſcharge the debt of the civil liſt; which do ſo forcibly ſtrike me, that I cannot forbear quoting them here. "I am informed there "remains a debt in the civil government of above ſix hundred "thouſand pounds. If ſo, ſurely there muſt have been a moſt "egregious neglect of duty, to ſay no worſe. There muſt have "been a ſtrange ſpirit of *extravagance* ſomewhere, or ſuch im-"menſe ſums could never have been so soon, *ſo inſenſibly ſqan-"dered* away. And it is amazing this *extravagance* ſhould hap-"pen under the conduct of perſons pretending to ſurpaſs *all* "their predeceſſors in the *knowledge* and *care* of the public "revenue. But we are not to wonder that the world has been very "free in its cenſures. None but thoſe who are in the *ſecret* can "refute the reflections that are made without doors, not only on "the miniſtry, *but even on both houſes of parliament*;—I muſt ſay "no more:—but I heartily wiſh that Time (the great diſcoverer "of hidden truths and concealed iniquities) may produce a liſt "of all ſuch (if any ſuch there were) who have been "perverted from their public duty by *private penſions*, "who have been *the hired ſlaves and the corrupt inſtru-"ments of a* PROFUSE AND VAIN-GLORIOUS ADMINISTRA-"TION. If there have been none ſuch, then the *whole* weight, "then the *whole* guilt, of the late miſmanagements, lies on the "miniſters themſelves." It will doubtleſs aſtoniſh his majeſty's good ſubjects, how, in theſe halcyon days of *wiſdom* and *æconomy*, this money can have been expended. And it will be more aſto-niſhing if we recollect the cry thatwas raiſed at the time of the laſt elections,

elections, " that not a ſhilling ſhould go out of the treaſury to influence any man," becauſe we cannot *that* way account for any of it. But that fact, ſuppoſing it to be one, though it may be doubted, was intended to wound the duke of Newcaſtle's intereſt: to prevent his oppoſing " the zealous, fond, believing, obſequious, " confiding, ſupporting, acquieſcing, bearing, and forbearing, *country gentlemen*." How well this *free* parliament, as it is called, has agreed with the ſenſe of their conſtituents, the *inadequate peace* and *odious exciſe* ſufficiently declare. Yet we have ſeen in theſe days of *virtue*, *wiſdom* and *æconomy*, ſuch a ſtrange alteration among men, ſuch a ſudden revival of obſolete places, ſuch an amazing *increaſe* of dependents, ſuch a munificent diſtribution of penſions, augmentation of ſalaries and other favours, that the inference is natural; if the intereſt of our country *is ſold*, what ſignifies the difference, whether the electors or elected *are bought*? The Whigs, in the moſt corrupt times of their adminiſtration, when there was every thing to fear from the reſtleſs ſpirits of the Tories and Jacobites, never went ſuch lengths as to be able to produce ſuch a liſt of placemen and penſioners as the preſent miniſtry can. When the vigorous and continued efforts of the Tories and Jacobites ſeemed to bid fair for enſlaving *this* country, there was then ſome very good reaſon for dealing out places and penſions to form a counterpoiſe to their power: but now, when not the leaſt ſpark of diſaffection appears in the land, when *every* ſubject almoſt adores his ſovereign, to INCREASE thoſe placemen and penſioners beyond what they were ever known in former times, ſhews, that the meaſures were ſuch, as there was reaſon to

appre-

apprehend the people would *not approve*; and therefore they required more than ordinary ſupport. Thus is our country bleeding to death between *profligacy* and *ignorance*.

I think I may be fairly and honeſtly allowed to ſuppoſe, that after the moſt flagrant violation of the privileges of parliament, the earls of Egremont and Halifax will not, in their miniſterial capacity, chuſe to face that great aſſembly: nor that you, ſir, will undertake to *do* the buſineſs of the houſe of commons; propoſe new taxes for diſcharging the intereſts of this and next year's ſupplies, and above all the arrears of the civil liſt. It is not believed that the preſent miniſtry can be ſo imprudent as to think they can accompliſh theſe great ends. They cannot be ſtrangers to the general diſguſts of the people: they cannot be ignorant that *their* meaſures are the cauſe; therefore for the ſake of that ſovereign, whom they pretend ſo zealouſly and faithfully to ſerve, it is not doubted but they will reſign. By this time they cannot but be convinced that no other ſtep will procure that harmony which is ſo much wanted: that this will be ſerving him *better* than ever they ſerved him before, — it will be to a good purpoſe. I will not preſume to ſay who ſhould or who ought to ſucceed to power; but I will venture to give my opinion upon the known goodneſs of his majeſty's heart, and the ſincere love which he bears to ALL his people, that he will condeſcend to meet them half way in the objects of their wiſhes and happineſs: and I ſincerely hope that when that time does come, (which cannot be far diſtant) an union among parties, and *divided families* may take place: for it is then, and not till then, that the national buſineſs can be proſecuted

cuted with glory and unanimity: then the ſupplies may be raiſed, ways and means found, and the debt of the civil liſt diſcharged, without throwing the kingdom into a ferment: then we may eſtabliſh our own internal happineſs at *home*; and, with WISDOM and SPIRIT in our councils, be reſpected by thoſe who will otherwiſe ſoon be our enemies *abroad*.

Some where towards the beginning of this letter I happened to drop an expreſſion, or a hint, concerning both "a deſertion and deception of friends." Leſt both, or either of theſe ſhould be miſrepreſented, by ſome of thoſe who fooliſhly vindicate the miniſterial cauſe, it will be neceſſary to explain what may be called the great outline, which I hope will be ſufficient to prevent any impoſitions on the public, with reſpect to an affair, which has more than once agitated the moſt eminent and reſpectable public companies and private gentlemen.

When a certain gentleman, whom I dare ſay you will eaſily recollect, underſtood that Mr. Onſlow intended to reſign the ſpeakerſhip of the houſe of commons, he firſt went and offered himſelf as ſpeaker to the duke of Newcaſtle, and then held himſelf out in the ſame capacity to lord Bute, whoſe intereſt he ſolicited towards obtaining the royal approbation. This latter ſtep was without the conſent, or even knowledge of his great and noble friends, with whom it was then thought (though not quite clear of ſuſpicion) he had in general acted through life *above-board*; and afterwards at leaſt diſſembled, if not denied the having done it. He then with the greateſt earneſtneſs ſupplicated their ſupport on that occaſion. A ſhort time after this he acknowledged to ſeveral friends the *deſtination* of himſelf as

ſpeaker, and put it upon his ——— perſonal intreaties of him, which he declared was attended with all the agreeable circumſtances of the cabinet, &c. The houſe of commons can never ſufficiently regret the not having got rid, in a gentleman-like manner, by the chair, of the moſt tedious lawyer that ever called them to repoſe. If there really had been any intention of putting him into the chair, it would have been on the ſame principle that a meeting of country gentlemen, on a commiſſion of the turnpike, &c always make it a rule to chuſe the moſt tedious and troubleſome long winded prater for their chairmen; for the derivation of SPEAKER is known to be analogous to that of *lucus a non lucendo*. At laſt finding an opportunity, by a ſmall ſacrifice of honour, &c. that he could cater much better for himſelf in another department, he abandoned his former ſceme, which, had he not deſerted his friends, would have obliged them to abandon him; and had the *preſumption* to take Mr. Pitt's ſeals.

When in his hands the ſeals he *found*,
Did they not make his brains go round?
Did they not turn his head?
I fancy, (but he hates a joke)
He *felt*, as Nell did, when ſhe woke
In lady Loverule's bed.

5 0C59

When great impending dangers ſhook
Its ſtate, old Rome dictators took
Judiciouſly from plough:

So we (but at a *pinch* THOU know'ſt)
To make the higheſt of the loweſt,
The TREAS'RY gave to YOU.

Another gentleman of real ſound ſenſe and good parts, of acknowledged probity and unſullied honour, I mean Mr. Prowſe, refuſed the ſame chair: who ſucceeded to it, I leave you, becauſe I would not *bluſh* to ſay

I am,

SIR,

With real friendſhip,

and very much eſteem,

your moſt obliged,

and moſt humble ſervant,

An INDEPENDENT WHIG.

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A

CANDID AND CONSTITUTIONAL

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Five laſt SPEECHES made to Parliament.

5-0059

" The Nature of Man is ſo frail, that whereſoever the Word of a
" ſingle Perſon has had the Force of Law, the innumerable Extra-
" vagances and Miſchiefs it has produced, have been ſo notorious,
" that all Nations, who are not ſtupid and ſlaviſh, have always
" abominated it; and made it their principal Care to find out Reme-
" dies againſt it, by ſo dividing and balancing the Powers of their
" Government, that *one* or a *few* men might not be able to oppreſs
" and deſtroy thoſe they ought to preſerve and protect."

SIDNEY.